



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Martin O'Malley.
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Gary D. Maynard
Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 6, 2007

CONTACT
Mark Vernarelli
410-339-5065
Jacqui Lampell
410-339-5007

Maryland's Criminal Justice Information Systems Unveil New Technology to Improve Background Check Service *Electronic Communications Dramatically Reduces Wait Time*

TOWSON, MD – Speedier background checks will soon be available to Maryland businesses and other employers thanks to a technology upgrade by Maryland's Criminal Justice Information Systems – Central Repository (CJIS-CR). CJIS-CR recently launched a pilot project that uses technology to convert applicant cards to electronic images thus ensuring quicker communications between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and employers.

"I applaud CJIS for using available technology to better serve the people of Maryland," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "This project is a great example of how streamlining what is usually a cumbersome process, can enhance the public safety of our citizens."

CJIS-CR, which is under the auspices of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), processes, maintains, and provides Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) for employment, licensing and legislatively approved reasons that require disclosure of that information. Responsibility to such a broad scope of customers and agencies has proven a labor-intensive challenge. Currently, CJIS-CR sends applicant cards to the FBI via postal mail. The FBI would, in turn, categorize them as non-priority, send them to a vendor for electronic conversion and finally deliver the cards back to CJIS-CR. With the new technology, what has taken 12-14 weeks to deliver to the requestor, will take only two weeks. This technology is providing ground breaking progress for the State of Maryland. Agencies with public safety related employee bases, such as the Childcare Administration, Labor and Licensing Departments and all other employment groups who are authorized to receive CHRI in Maryland, are experiencing a huge improvement in customer delivery and satisfaction as a result of successful implementation of this project.

Communications with the FBI have improved dramatically because the Repository now possesses the technology to convert applicant cards to electronic images. Electronic submissions from Maryland go to the immediate response FBI queue, thereby ensuring a same day, 24-hour FBI response. In addition, later this month, CJIS-CR will progress to the next phase of implementation, to include email delivery of the FBI response back to CJIS-CR.

(More)

As CJIS-CR forges ahead, it continues to address the issues related to paper submissions. In 2005, a federally issued mandate required background checks for all potential Hazmat drivers. To satisfy the expanded need, CJIS-CR successfully negotiated the use of statewide Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) buildings to establish five locations to collect electronic fingerprints for background checks of those potential Hazmat drivers, as well as, future endeavors that involve background checks of other applicant employment licensing types. Implementation of the latter is scheduled for March at the Bel Air MVA location, with the remaining four all operable by the end of April.

Through negotiation, CJIS-CR has also secured a downtown location with the Department of Labor and Licensing (DLLR), to operate a Livescan for electronic processing. Livescan allows for an electronic picture of an individual's fingerprint as opposed to the traditional method of using inks and cards. CJIS-CR has also initiated efforts to allow outside vendors to provide electronic fingerprinting services. Such a system ensures rapid delivery of information.

The implications of these projects are far reaching in that CJIS-CR can provide current, accurate and complete criminal history information to employers who must make informed employment decisions. With the help of the new technology CJIS-CR has made great strides in this arena.
